

**To the Parents of Students Who Will Take 9th Grade Honors English:**

All students who will be taking 9th grade honors English during the 2009-2010 school year are required to read a minimum of **five (5) books AND** complete a **written journal**.

Students **must complete** the following reading and written journal before the school year begins:

**1. Ella Minnow Pea by Mark Dunn**

*An epistolary or novel written in letters, which portrays a society that begins to outlaw letters of the alphabet one by one*

**2. Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury**

*A futuristic cautionary tale which portrays a society where books are outlawed*

**These books represent a study in similar literary themes. We will analyze the selections upon returning to school in the fall. As you read, take note of the similarities in theme and societal reaction to plot events.**

Students are then to choose **one (1) book from each** of the following categories.

**3. Epic Struggles and Adventurous Journeys**

- **The Hobbit by J. R. R. Tolkien**
- **The Fellowship of the Ring by J. R. R. Tolkien**
- **The Once and Future King by T. H. White**

**4. Understanding Historical Prejudice, Making Tough Decisions, and Growing Up**

- **A Separate Peace by John Knowles**
- **A Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry** (Screenplay)
- **Rocket Boys by Homer Hickam, also published as October Sky** (Nonfiction)
- **The Book Thief by Markus Zusak**
- **The Children of Willesden Lane by Mona Golabek & Lee Cohen** (Nonfiction)

**5. Classics**

- **Treasure Island by Robert Louis Stevenson**
- **Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë**
- **Murder on the Orient Express by Agatha Christie**

**Written Requirement:**

**Students are required to keep a journal or notebook as they read. For each novel, students are required to answer the following five (5) questions in complete sentences:**

1. *Who are the main characters in the novel? Include names, personalities, attitudes, motivations, actions, etc. Include quotes and page numbers from the story to prove your observations.*

2. *What are the main plot events of the novel? How do the characters contribute to the plot?*

3. *What themes are present in the story? What is the most important theme? Provide evidence from the story (quotes or examples) to support your thoughts.*

4. *Consider connections between your own life and the novel. What connections can you make? Explain them. Consider character motivations, plot events, themes, etc.*

5. *Give your reactions to the each book. Did you like it or not? Why? If you could change anything about the novel, what would you change? Why?*

Students should fully develop each question. A well-developed response is one that is written in complete sentences, neatly composed, and represents an honest, good-faith effort to address the entirety of the question. **Students are required to bring their reading journals with them to class on the first day of school.**

The books will be available at a variety of prices through a range of publishers and booksellers. Borders, near the Viewmont Mall, cooperates with the school district to secure multiple copies of the texts for purchase by our students. Please purchase full text, rather than abridged, for each title. If your student has an available unabridged version of any of these books, the text may be used. The Abington Community Library and the Scranton Public Library will have copies available for loan throughout the summer. Students are encouraged to use the libraries. Upon returning to school in September of 2009, students will be evaluated on their reading of these texts. The summer reading journal will also be assessed for completeness and effort upon returning to school. The reading journal is designed to help students prepare for their September evaluations.

These selections represent a wide range of literary language and ideas. They are intended to introduce students to the kind of content they can expect to encounter in their honors level studies. In an effort to promote more opportunities for choice and personal reading enjoyment, this list contains a wide range of modern and classic titles.

Contemporary selections may contain brief instances of profanity. Parents are encouraged to take part in the process of choosing the best books for their students. Read book jackets and back covers to find the subjects and styles of greatest interest. While the texts should present some challenge to the students, they should also allow hours of enjoyable reading. Furthermore, this reading will increase the body of literature upon which the students can draw as they learn to analyze ideas and discern meaning. Have a wonderful summer and enjoy reading!

Sincerely,

9<sup>th</sup> Grade High School  
Honors English Teachers  
Abington Heights